



# Press Release

## Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<http://oig.ssa.gov/>

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### **Utah Company Agrees to Pay Civil Monetary Penalty to Settle Alleged Violation of Social Security Act** *Company's Website Design and Domain Names Were Misleading*

Bennett & Gray, LLC, (Bennett & Gray) of Lindon, Utah, agreed to pay a \$50,000.00 civil monetary penalty to the Social Security Administration (SSA), to settle the SSA Office of the Inspector's (OIG) claim that the company violated Section 1140 of the *Social Security Act*, SSA Inspector General Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr. announced.

Bennett & Gray operated the websites [www.sscards.us](http://www.sscards.us) and [www.sscardapplication.com](http://www.sscardapplication.com). SSA OIG asserts that the two websites violated Section 1140. The websites offered for a fee, assistance in applying for a new or replacement Social Security card. The SSA OIG asserts that the websites' design, along with related domain names, created the false impression of a connection with SSA.

Bennett & Gray's website operation received both Congressional and media attention in 2011. Bennett & Gray voluntarily, and on its own initiative, redesigned its website operation to bring it into compliance with Section 1140. While not admitting that it violated Section 1140 of the Act, Bennett & Gray agreed to pay a civil monetary penalty to settle the claim. Bennett & Gray also agreed to discontinue the use of the domain names [www.sscards.us](http://www.sscards.us) and [www.sscardapplication.com](http://www.sscardapplication.com).

Section 1140 prohibits the use of SSA words and symbols in advertisements or solicitations in a manner that conveys the false impression that SSA approved, endorsed, or authorized the subject of the advertisements or solicitations; or that the subject has some official connection with SSA.

Inspector General O'Carroll reminds all citizens that the Social Security Administration provides the Form SS-5 Application free of charge and makes the form available through its official website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), its Field Offices, and other authorized locations nationwide. Anyone suspecting fraud of this nature, or any fraud, waste or abuse relating to the Social Security Administration is asked to contact the Office of the Inspector General via our website at <http://oig.ssa.gov>, or via our toll free phone number at 1-800-269-0271 (TTY 1-866-501-2101).

In response to a recent increase in Internet-based Section 1140 allegations, SSA OIG has launched an aggressive effort to pursue more cases and deter violations of Section 1140 through enforcement and educational outreach. SSA has available more information regarding misleading advertising in its pamphlet [What You Need To Know About Misleading Advertising](#) (03/09) (05-10005).

*For more information, please contact Jonathan Lasher, OIG's Assistant Inspector General for External Relations, at 410-965-2671.*